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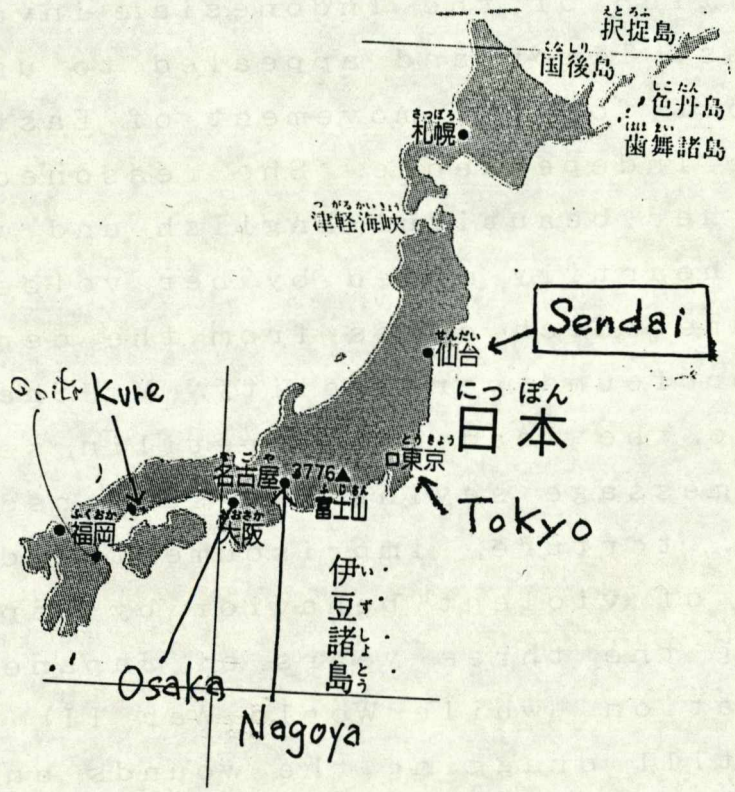
Organizing
Sendai
East Timor Group

"Sendai East Timor Group"
is one area group of
"Free East Timor! Japan Coalition"



Michio Takahashi

Organizing "Sendai East Timor Group"

From a point of view of a participant

Michio Takahashi in Sendai

"Sendai East Timor Group" is one area group of "Free East Timor! Japan Coalition."

1. Ms. Mimi Fereira visited Sendai.

On Nov. 16 1986, Ms. Mimi Fereira talked the history and the present condition of the Indonesian invasion to East Timor and appealed to us for support for the movement of East Timor Independence. She reasoned us with her beautiful English and we were heartily moved by her voice of Maubere which comes from the depth of her profound personality. Mr. Shanana Gusmao, the leader of Fretilin, sent us a message saying "We suffered massacre, torture, imprisonment and all kinds of violent behavior by Japanese during the three years of Japanese occupation (while World War II) and are still dragging the wounds and the desolation of our country brought about by those criminal and barbaric slaughterers. These wounds have fes-

tered today....." Amid the historic evolution of Japan Modern Nation Japanese, who invaded Korea and China and has committed numerous crimes to the Asian people such as Nankin massacre, forced the people of South-East Asia to sacrifice, bombed Darwin crossing the equator, and finally occupied Timor island, which is locted in the utmost east of Lesser Sunda Archipelago, for three years. We are ashamed of our ignorance and felt keenly that to do nothing is inexcusable for us when they are going to bring our peaceful constitution to naught. This constitution was established because Japan repented of its aggressive war.

2. Visiting Fretilin Committee in Darwin

Ms. Mimi Fereira talked in clear English as follows; there live twenty thousand of East Timorese refugees in Australia, and three thousand of them stay in Darwin and about 20 members of Fretilin Committee are acting positively there, and they will welcome Japanese supporters.

I visited Darwin city for one week during my winter vacation. I was

warmly welcomed by 7 members of Fretilin including Ms. Mimi Fereira at the house of Mr. Agio Pereira, the president of Fretilin Committee. Mr. Agio Pereira who holds an additional post of the representative of "Australian Union for East Timor" is a intrepid young leader with sharp but gentle eyes. He is striving day and night for independence of Democratic Republic of East Timor, together with the research about antipollution movement.

Mr. Pereira explained me the history of struggle for independence against Indonesian invasion. When he told the rebuilding process of the Fretilin, his voice grew louder with excitement and I felt a passion which can be perceived only from those fighting the righteous war. This Fretilin organization, once destroyed perfectly, reconstructed by the leadership of Shanana Gusmao and by the strenuous effort, even risking their lives, of the people of Maubere.

Mr. Pereira was pleased to hear that the visit of Ms. Mimi Fereira moved Japanese deeply and welcomed me warmly. He thought my visit is the

proof of Japanese solidarity and sympathy and I was entertained at home-made dinner.

I am sorry I can't report you perfectly what the seven members of Fretilin in Darwin told me, but the following three points impressed me clearly.

The first is that the brutal history of Japanese cruel behavior was told as intimate events through talk of the seven members' own grandfathers grandmothers, fathers, and mothers. During this period of Japanese occupation, the first half of 1940, many Timorese were slayed, or were robbed of food and starved to death by Japanese.

The second is that the real aspects of Timorese fight against Indonesia are completely hidden by the military government of dictator Suharuto and they accused the invader's inhumane conducts beyond all description are concealed from the eyes of the people outside Timor. Fretilin supportors outside Timor earnestly wish Japanese citizens' movement to give them concrete aid to break down this barriar of "seclu-

sionism" and let the world know massacre, starvation, and violation of all kinds of fundamental human rights in East Timor and to report the real features of Maubere people who are fighting to defend the human dignity for the sake of independence. To attain these objects, they want economical and technical aid to fortify and expand the radio wireless communication of Fretilin.' It will be a great power for the movement of independence to report the reality of East Timor.' they stressed.

The third is that East Timor supporters' organization in Australia was really solid and reliable one. Each independent group in Darwin, Sydney, Melbourne and so on, unites and forms "Australian Coalition for East Timor" as a nation-wide network, whose representative is appointed by turns. These various activities in the Pacific area impressed me profoundly and were very instructive for Japanese citizens' movement.

On the evening of Dec. 31 in 1986, I took off the Darwin air port firmly carrying the messages to Japanese citizens' movement from Ms. Mimi

Fereira and Mr. Agio Pereira. On my way home I could clearly see the beautiful Timor island through the window. It was covered with rain forests and was glowing under the gigantic columns of equatorial clouds

3. Organizing "Sendai East Timor Group"

As soon as I came home, I handed over the two messages addressed to Japanese citizens' movement to those who had attended the meeting with Ms. Mimi Fereira. I also had several chances to appeal the earnest desire of East Timorese in Darwin.

Some of the executive committee, who had wanted to form some organization to support East Timor independence, met together and organized "Sendai East Timor Group" on Mar. 8, 1987 to materialize this aim, especially for nation-wide campaign to fortify and expand the radio wireless communication. This group was formed by 18 individual participants. It doesn't have the representative and each member takes charge of a portion of the whole work so that he/she can act independently with his/her free will. In this way this group, small

but loaded with an important task, was born.

I heartily thank the respectable friends in Kure, Osaka, Tokyo, Nagoya and those who support the independence of East Timor in Japan, as well as those who had had sympathy with this East Timor matter at an early time and arranged to invite Ms. Mimi Fereira in Sendai. As a member of Sendai East Timor Group I hope your continuous favor to our group from now on.

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